

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 COLOMB 01401 211257Z POSS DUPE  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGRE-00  
DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 AID-05 IGA-02 /034 W  
-----220249Z 043233 /72

R 211050Z APR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7152  
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

UNCLAS COLOMBO 1401

DEPT PASS USDA; NEW DELHI FOR AGATT

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, ECON, PINT, CE

SUBJ: RECORD PADDY HARVEST ALLOWS INCREASED RICE RATION

REF: (A) COLOMBO 1293; (B) COLOMBO 1036; (C) COLOMBO 0257

1. WITH HARVEST ESSENTIALLY COMPLETED, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE NOW ESTIMATES MAHA PADDY PRODUCTION AT 53-55 MILLION BUSHEL WHICH EXCEEDS PREVIOUS RECORD HIGH HABA OF 52.6 MILLION BUSHEL IN 1974. MINISTRY EXPERTS ATTRIBUTE RECORD HARVEST TO IMPROVED RAINFALL IN DRY ZONE AND ADDITIONAL IRRIGATION WATERS FROM MAHAWELI DIVERSION WHICH ALLOWED HARVEST OF HIGH PERCENTAGE OF ACREAGE SOWN. IN ADDITION, PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT AVERAGE YIELD MAY REACH 50 BUSHEL PER ACRE, A CONSIDERABLE IMPROVEMENT OVER PAST TWO YEARS. FINAL FIGURES FOR THIS YEAR'S MAHA WILL BE AVAILABLE IN ANOTHER 2-3 MONTHS.

2. RICE STOCKS ARE BUILDING UP RAPIDLY AND GSL HAS ASKED SOME FOREIGN SUPPLIERS TO HOLD BACK DELIVERIES. COMBINATION OF BUMPER MAHA HARVEST AND IMPORTS HAVE REDUCED OPEN MARKET PRICES FOR RICE FROM A HIGH OF RS. 2.00 PER LB. TO ABOUT RS. 1.25, AND PRICES MAY APPROACH RATION LEVEL OF RS. 1.00 PER LB.

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 01401 211257Z POSS DUPE

3. GOOD SUPPLY POSITION HAS ALLOWED GSL TO ANNOUNCE THAT EFFECTIVE MAY 2 WEEKLY RICE RATION WILL BE INCREASED FROM 3 POUNDS PER PERSON (REFTEL B) TO 4. PERSONS NOT PAYING INCOME TAX WILL STILL RECEIVE ONE OF THOSE POUNDS FREE (THE REMAINDER WILL BE SOLD AT RS. 1.00 PER LB.). IF EVERYONE DRAWS FULL RATION, GSL WILL BE DISTRIBUTING APPROXIMATELY 100,000

TONS OF RICE PER MONTH. FOOD COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE, HOWEVER, THINKS THAT AVAILABILITY OF CHEAP WHEAT FLOUR (AT RS. 0.80 PER LB. FOR FLOUR AND RS. 0.75 PER LB. FOR BREAD) AND DECLINING OPEN MARKET PRICE OF RICE WILL HOLD MONTHLY RATION DISTRIBUTION TO AROUND 80,000 TONS. FOOD COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE ESTIMATES THAT SUPPLIES ON HAND PLUS MAHA PRODUCTION AND ALREADY SCHEDULED IMPORTS WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO SUPPLY 80,000 TONS OF RICE PER MONTH THROUGH SUMMER MONTHS (I.E., UNTIL ELECTION TIME). IF, HOWEVER, DEMAND REACHES FULL 100,000 TONS, GSL WILL HAVE TO IMPORT AN ADDITIONAL 20,000 TONS PER MONTH.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2741364  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** RECORD PADDY HARVEST ALLOWS INCREASED RICE RATION  
**TAGS:** EAID, EAGR, ECON, PINT, CE  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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